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ABSTRACT

The development of a competency based teacher preservice and inservice education program in learning disabilities is described. It is explained that the program consisted of video modules of instruction and opportunities for discussion. Initial participants in the program are said to have been teachers from four school districts who evaluated basic program weaknesses (such as the need for more personal interaction with the instructor), and strengths (including simple language and terminology.) (CL)

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ABSTRACT: SCHOOL, COMMUNITY & PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION AND INSERVICE IN LEARNING DISABILITIES.

Organizing to Help the Learning Disabled

Madonna College, a liberal arts, career-oriented, co-educational college in Livonia, Michigan, is in the process of developing a delivery system to provide for development of minimal level competencies for those working with the learning disabled child. Parents, inservice teachers, teacher-aides, pre-service teachers, and administrators have been involved in the process.

The project was designed to respond to two problems:

1) assurance that concept input theory and knowledge of methodology, as represented by course instruction, was consistent and not variable depending upon instructor; and 2) assurance that specific concepts in learning disability theory and methodology were appropriately demonstrated. The project that evolved was composed of video modules of instruction based on current texts and periodicals, with concomitant provision of information with respect to materials and methods of instructing the learning disabled. Built into each module were procedures for involving participants in activities which could be measured in terms of learnings acquired.

Samples of the video and script portion were presented, with ideas for replication of the process in other areas. A critique of the product and concomitant changes in it were discussed.

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ORGANIZING TO HELP THE LEARNING DISABLED

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A college, several school systems, inservice teachers, pre-service teachers, and parents combined efforts to provide help for the learning disabled students both within their local communities and throughout the State and Canada. This is their story, a very personal, but replicable approach to helping the learning disabled, and those who are most intimately involved with them.

Like most stories, this one began with a problem. The State Department of Michigan had decreed that individuals wishing to work with the learning disabled must be certified as teachers of the learning disabled. In order to be so certified, these teachers must develop certain specified competencies. A State Department appointed committee consisting of special education personnel from the various teacher training institutions within Michigan formulated the list of competencies which were ultimately adopted by the State Department. Then the college personnel returned home to develop the programs which would instill these competencies within the prospective teachers.

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-2-

The task of competency development was only the beginning, the major task was to provide programs for training of teachers, and then to be certain that these teachers had the specific competencies stated. While some of the institutions had had previous experience with development of competency based educational programs, others had not. Madonna College, while one of those fortunate enough to have had past experience with competency based education, still found itself facing some significant obstacles:

1. With different instructors teaching various components of the prospective program, how could a consistent presentation of information be delivered, so that both theory and practice would be included in the delivery system, with stability of amount and kind of delivery?
2. How could the delivery system for competency based educational training in working with the learning disabled be relevant to the needs of the children involved?
3. How could the delivery system most effectively serve both a preservice and inservice population of teachers?
4. How could the delivery system include service to parents?

Madonna College had been noted for its many in-district functions and services. Therefore, it was in keeping with their service pattern to contact various districts and to involve them in planning the delivery system. Contacts were made with numerous districts and ultimately involved four specific areas: Location Number 1 an almost totally black community bordering Metropolitan Detroit, with lower to lower middle class blue collar workers; Location Number 2 a racially balanced community, Southwest of Detroit, consisting of lower to lower middle class Blacks, Appalachians, Latinos, and various

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3

other ethnic groups; Location Number 3 an almost totally White lower middle class community, between Inkster and Livonia, bordering on the West of Detroit; Essex County Separate School Board a Roman Catholic school system of approximately 450 teachers, serving French and English populations of children. Needs assessment measures were used by in-district coordinators following the college's initial contacts with them offering to provide inservice in learning disabilities. In the interim, the Director of Learning Disabilities at the college began to develop competency contracts to meet the listed teacher training competencies handed down from the State Department Committee. The contracts specified certain activities and outcomes which must be agreed to and completed by those wishing recommendation for certification as teachers of the learning disabled.

The needs assessments within the four school districts indicated that teachers felt insecure in working with the learning disabled within their classrooms specifically in the areas of reading and mathematics. These teachers indicated that they wanted to have some base line theory with direct application demonstrated so they could begin to help children as quickly as possible. With this background knowledge the personnel at the college began to think in terms of two specific delivery system components, i.e. one theoretical component, followed by one application component, concrete in format and quickly applicable to discussion and instruction.

Since the Special Education Department at Madonna College consisted of two people, the Department Chairman, and the Director of Learning

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-4-

Disabilities, serving four districts plus conducting on-campus courses appeared to be an insurmountable task. This proved especially difficult, since at the beginning of the academic year, the key professor in reading instruction resigned, and five classes were unmanned for opening of the academic year. However, as is frequently the case, a problem of this nature creates the proper atmosphere for development of a creative approach, the team of two at the college began to develop an idea. They began to ask whether it would be possible to program instruction in such a way that planned interaction could be structured within a component, so that the particular component could be operated without the presence of a trained learning disabilities instructor. They further asked, if such a component could be developed, whether it could also be used to provide instruction for undergraduate students and for parents. From these two questions came the program to be described.

It was decided to develop the theoretical component first, and in this component to present a straight lecture format coupled with a discussion-interaction segment, i.e. to have the instructor deliver a theoretical presentation, provide a break, and then deliver a segment showing either discussion with children, interaction with children, or some portrayal in episode form to trigger discussion. Since the delivery system had to be consistent, and meet certain specified purposes, it was decided to bank the same on video-tape. In order to provide for an untrained individual to guide the discussion, using the video tape, a complete transcript of the instructor's notes was made available in manual form. Incidentally, it was soon discovered that after viewing the film many of the listeners wished to have a copy of the instructor's notes

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-5-

to check their own note taking. Soon others began to ask for the notes to follow as the video was being played. Even within the audience, the visual and auditory learners could be identified, and began to accommodate their needs by their requests. Certain post degree teachers were identified to act as moderators for the classes which were set up in Location #1, #2 and at the college itself. The Department Chairman travelled to Essex County to present directly to the 38 teachers and County Superintendent and to provide feedback on the items not included in the videos. Thus, as the theoretical video's were developed, feedback came from the participants, and was incorporated in the upcoming tapes as they were prepared. One of the significant comments was with respect to the length of the tapes, and it was soon discovered that breaking the one hour tapes into half-hour segments for viewing at mid-day in the districts was more successful than a full one hour presentation after the school day had ended. At this point, the third location had not participated in the project other than through the advisement of one of their learning specialists who helped in planning. However, in spite of the theoretical thrust of this series, teachers aides within the respective districts began to speak out about not being permitted to take part. Thus, 93 aides from Location One, and 6 aides from Location Two began to take part in the instructional classes. Location #2 received the video instruction, while the first group had special classes designed to meet their needs.

The first sample that is presented shows a discussion segment of the first series. Following this discussion segment, the participants

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-6-

would be asked to form groups to discuss questions provided in the teacher's manual, or to take part in activities related to the discussion sample, or to develop a relationship between what they had viewed and an article provided in the manual, and used for handouts for them to read.

Each class of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, or teacher aides was subdivided into discussion groups of five and were given tasks by the moderator. These tasks were specified in the teacher-discussion manual guide, and supportive materials for conduction of the tasks were included for the discussion leader to duplicate for the respective groups.

The video tapes were developed by the audio-visual department at the college, using student help. The intent of the tapes was to reach the prospective audience, and not to serve as a professional published component. The video tapes were used on the college campus, at Locations One and Two and in Essex County, Ontario. The Essex County teachers participated as an audience in the development of the second series on methods and media. Four to five of the Essex County teachers commuted to the College once per week to act as participants in development of the particular video scheduled for that week. They reacted in terms of value and modification of the tape, met the children who participated, and gave support and encouragement to the production. In addition, they acted to provide insights to others in Essex County when the video was shown there.

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-7-

The second demonstration segment is illustrative of the lecture format used in the series. In order that attention be given solely to the input of information, the instructor remained seated and verbally conveyed information to the viewers. Complete outline transcripts were available for follow through on the presentation. This segment attempted to convey the minimal theoretical input necessary for a classroom teacher, parent, or resource room teacher of learning disabilities on which to build instruction. Discussions following each theoretical segment related to direct application of the theory, with guide questions supplied for discussion purposes.

Two significant facts evolved from use of this segment. First, the video portion was more distracting than helpful. Second, the segments were too lengthy. As a result of these insights, the program is being redone on audio cassettes, thirty minutes in duration, with film strips adding some visual input when deemed advisable. The transcripts of notes are being modified to accommodate the shorter versions of the audio. Thus, the revision will have approximately ten minutes of interaction for discussion, and twenty minutes of theoretical input. The necessary supportive input not delivered in the lecture will be included in the transcription portion supplied to the participants. Contacts have already been made for publication, as a publisher has expressed interest in the component in the revised form. Whatever happens, package will be available from the college early in 1977.

The second component, also in revision currently, consisted of actual demonstrations of materials and procedures for instruction.

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-8-

Since the desire was to make this section as relevant to the application needs of teachers as possible, children from one of the participating districts were invited to attend the taping and to act as students.

Their learning disabilities teacher, from Location Three accompanied them and assisted in the actual instruction of the students. Parents of the children brought them to the college and stayed to view the taping. An informal instructional atmosphere was maintained in order to allow for critical discussions to follow the use of the tapes. Also, since parents were to be actual participants in inservice and in taping, the value and procedures that parents could use for instruction of children were included in this segment.

The transcription of the methods and media component consisted of some theoretical bases for the lesson to be presented, discussion of materials to be used, demonstration of use of the methods and materials on the video media, and complete lesson plans and accompanying materials for follow up instruction in classrooms by teachers, or at home by parents. The latter portion of the program appeared to be the most beneficial to all the participants. The learning disability teacher who acted consultatively was able to continue the lessons back at school, viewers were able to initiate the lessons in their own classrooms, and parents found it possible to understand what and why a teacher did certain things with their children. Additionally, the parents found they could translate the lessons to home instruction, and they felt a growing part of the project.

As the project concluded, and evaluation data was collected, certain points appeared to occur in all locations on and off campus.

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-9-

Supportive data indicated:

1. The format of the notes made it possible to quickly review what seen and heard.
2. Discussion idcas provided valuable incentive to interact and extend the learnings.
3. Many had the opportunity to participate who might not have had such an opportunity if the media had not been used -- they could not have attended college class.
4. Compact nature of the presentations allowed for much learning in a brief period of time.
5. Simple language and terminology permitted those who had little background to take part, as well as those who needed review and update.
6. Supply of additional reading materials and references to books and articles from which lecture gleaned gave materials for continuation of learning experience. (Instructor did not keep his references a deep dark secret.)

Comments from participants pointed out the following inadequacies of the program:

1. Difficulties of attending for the one hour period.
2. Desire to have more personal interaction with the instructor.
3. Need for translation of theory and practice to the secondary learning disability student.
4. Need for some means of continuation of contact with the college in order to assure continued growth of participants.

In response to the supportive comments, and in answer to the concerns with the program, the design for revision and continuation of development of competency based instruction for pre and inservice training in learning disabilities has been developed. The two segments in theory and practice will be revised in audio format with film strips rather than video accompaniment. Thus, the revised format will provide for greater

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-10-

interaction of the instructor with the group, as the tape can be turned off periodically for discussion, and the film strip can be rewound and certain situations reviewed and discussed. Additionally, the Chairperson of the Education-Psychology Department will prepare a theoretical and practical inservice packet for secondary teachers of the learning disabled. The format of such a book is to be found in the appendix of this paper. Accompanying the book transcript will be an auditory cassette, filmstrip component.

Neighboring districts will be asked to participate in the development of the secondary learning disabilities component, if they desire, and will be furnished the transcripts and tapes for preview use. A Learning Disabilities Conference dealing with the specific problems of the secondary school student will be conducted during 1976-77 academic year, and the transcripts and tapes displayed and demonstrated.

The completion of the secondary component of the competency program concludes the first half of the sequence. The following components are yet to be developed: Perceptual Development, Language Development, and Diagnosis and Evaluation. Based on input from evaluation of the first half of the sequence, modifications will be made in development of this latter half.

Thus, a problem in terms of service and staffing resulted in some creative efforts from faculty and administration. All of those involved have learned a great deal about pre-service, inservice, and parent education in learning disabilities. The outlines of component

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-11-

parts of the program, competency forms, etc., presented in the appendix show what one college has done to help provide improved learning experiences for the learning disabled. Madonna College sincerely hopes their efforts will benefit others who may choose to use them, but the college faculty feels even more strongly that the procedural model which they established in their work with school districts and pre-service teachers offers much to encourage other school districts and universities to coordinate their efforts to develop service models to fit the individual needs of the communities involved. Perhaps, we, like the learning disabled child may say:

Tell me what you did,
When confronted by dilemmas.

Don't tell me what to do,
My dilemmas are my own.

If I know what you did,
And what you had to face,

Since I know what I face,
Perhaps I can discover what to do.

Presented at International Federation of Learning Disabilities
Montreal, Canada
August 12, 1976

-12-

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Student's Name: _____ Course No. _____

Evaluator's Name: _____ sition: _____

Address: _____ Tel. # - Student _____
Evaluator _____

Competencies to be Evaluated (State Defined Attachments)		Yes	No	No Evidence
1.0	Demonstrates Knowledge of normal and variant human development through establishment of individual goals based on their learning profiles. Evidence: _____			
2.0	Demonstrates knowledge of assessment through use of informal and formal evaluation instruments. Evidence: _____			
	Demonstrates knowledge of proper curriculum, ways of prescriptive planning and implementation. Evidence: _____			
4.0	Uses prescriptive planning and implements same. Evidence: _____			
5.0	Applies behavioral modification and classroom management techniques. Evidence: _____			
6.0	Shows knowledge of sociological and cultural influence on learning by providing for same. Evidence: _____			
7.0 8.0 9.0	Demonstrates ability to work consistently with teachers, para-professionals, parents, and educators in planning for learning disabled students. Evidence: _____			

LEARNING DISABILITIES COMPETENCY EVALUATION FORM - Page 2.

Competencies to be evaluated:		Yes	No	No Evidence
10.0	Evidences awareness of self by analysis of methods and materials used with students, and constructive reshaping of procedures. Evidence: _____			
11.0	Evaluates program based on knowledge re-quirements, plans and programs, planning of learning disabilities theory and materials. Evidence: _____			

/s/ _____
TITLE.

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Livonia, Michigan 48150

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEARNING DISABILITIES PRESENTATION	<u>Tape #</u>
1. Etiology of Learning Disabilities	579
2. Neurological/Neuroclinical Problems	580
3. Reading Instructions with Children	593
4. Observable Factors of Learning Disabilities	581
5. Hyperactivity	582
6. Perceptual Factors - Visual - Motor Perception	583
6a. Mock Demonstrations - Perception	585
7. Perceptual Factors - Differing Opinions	584
7a. Mock Demonstrations - Perception	586
8. Language Development	587
9. Mock Demonstrations - Language Development	589
10. Language Development - Concept Attainment	588
11. Mock Demonstrations - Language Development	590
12. Phonics	591
13. The Reading Process and the Learning Disabled Child Phonics Difficulties	592
14. Introduction and Review Test Discussion	594

Outline of each Presentation included

Anticipated Format: 30 minute audio cassettes with film strip accompanying same.
Availability Date: January, 1977

Prepared by: June J. Slobodian
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PSY 468 - METHODS & MEDIA IN LEARNING DISABILITIES

Behavioral Goals:

1. Each participant will become cognizant of the various areas in which specific methods and materials should be analyzed in order to work with the learning disabled child, as evidenced by the participant's preparing a card file of references and categorizing these by area and purpose.
2. Each participant will have an in-depth knowledge of methods and materials in one specific area in which learning disabled students need help, as evidenced by preparation of a term paper, activity sheets, and oral, video presentation.

Topics to be Covered in Lecture and Video Presentations

1. Informal Diagnosis of Learning Problems.
2. Teaching of Reading - Readiness
3. Teaching of Reading - Decoding, Part I
4. Teaching of Reading - Decoding, Part II
5. Teaching of Reading - Comprehension
6. Teaching of Language
7. Teaching of Spelling
8. Teaching of Writing
9. Teaching of Mathematics
10. Teaching of Social Studies
11. Teaching of Science
12. Teaching of Study Habits

Assignment: Each participant is to select one area above and research teaching techniques in that area, directing attention to materials and methods to help students with learning problems. The participant is to prepare a 20-30 page double spaced report, complete with footnotes. He is to develop a pre-post test to accompany the materials. He will then present the report on video tape, with a live audience of his peers. Evaluation will be made by use of the pre-post test instrument. Presentations will begin the fifth night of class and will run approximately one hour each. They may include materials, if properly displayed.

TEXT ENTITLED: MAINSTREAMING THE SECONDARY LEARNING DISABILITY STUDENT

- Preface: Points out the serious lack of consideration given to learning disability children after they leave the elementary school. Emphasizes the need for continued classroom support to accommodate these children in order to avoid school related problems.
- Chapter I: Defines the characteristics of the secondary learning disability student, the unique problems he faces and presents to the teacher. Suggests classroom activities to use in identification of the learning disability student and provides survival techniques for both teacher and student. Emphasizes behavior management techniques.
- Chapter II: Presents the close relationship which exists between language-reading-learning disabilities. Points out ways all teachers can work to aid the learning disability child in development of improved language and reading skills. Provides specific lesson plans by content area.
- Chapter III: Presents the need for different approaches to remedial reading in the upper grades. Outlines some techniques for successfully remediating the secondary learning disability student without reverting to the elementary level approaches.
- Chapter IV: Points up the problems the secondary learning disability student faces in the math area. Discusses the controversy over conceptual vs. factual learnings re. the learning disability student. Presents concrete lesson plans for classroom use.
- Chapter V: Discusses the role of social studies in socializing the learning disability student. Expands on the role of experience and the core approach to instruction. Develops the unit theme of instruction for all students specifying the role of the learning disability student in this activity.
- Chapter VI: Presents the values of science and scientific thinking in assisting the learning disability student. Outlines the specific techniques for use in the science laboratory.
- Chapter VII: Establishes a physical education curriculum for the learning disability student pointing up how it can operate within the regular physical education program. Emphasizes the crucial factors involved in the development of the learning disabilities students concepts of physical self.

Page #2

- Chapter VIII: Points up the aesthetic needs of learning disabilities students in the secondary school. Presents art and music activities which can be used to integrate the learning disabilities students experiences into the regular art and music instructional programs.
- Chapter IX: Presents the various organizational patterns of instruction which lend themselves to incorporation of the learning disability student in the mainstream of education.
- Chapter X: Provides suggestions for parent support of the learning disability student. Gives ideas and ways of communicating these to parents. Includes a list of games and activities for home use.
- Chapter XI: Describes various resources within the community available to the secondary learning disability student. Suggests ways of working with the community to provide transition from school to work for the student.
- Chapter XII: In conclusion, presents a set of competencies needed by those who choose to work with the secondary learning disabled student. Suggests means of developing these competencies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Annotated bibliography of texts and articles relating to the secondary learning disability student.

Format: 30 minute audio tapes with film strips to accompany same. Book transcript.

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Availability Date: June, 1977